

## **COUNCILLORS REPORT - 2017**

Since the large AGM much has been happening within Runnymede, especially on the Planning and economic front., but also in Thorpe Ward with regard to the proposed Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan but I know Linda is going into more depth on this subject.

Suffice to say a large amount of work and effort has been put in by the Forum members and I would like to give my personal thanks to all those involved. They know who they are. I know the Councillors are very grateful for your support.

The work preparing the Local Plan for Runnymede up to 2035 has been ongoing and continues to focus everyone's mind on the way forward to provide more housing. It is a fact that Runnymede has to go through a process of releasing more land for development, but the restrictions of Green Belt and flooding concerns do not make this easy. Protection of the Green Belt to many is seen as paramount and there has now been a further review of the Green Belt across the Borough. It is estimated possibly that 2% or a maximum of 3% could be released from Green Belt across the whole Borough and further information has today been made available on RBC website with regard to this.

Personally for the area of Thorpe I believe there are certain areas where the Green Belt is sacrosanct but Developers will still try to claim that these areas should be released for housing etc. We shall see what transpires but that is why the Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan is so important within its designated area.

The large regeneration project is happening as I speak in Addlestone with another project called Egham Gateway on the horizon and also a planning application for the new leisure centre at Egham which will include a swimming pool is due to be submitted shortly. All positive news for Runnymede as a whole.

During the last year I have continued to serve on Planning and Licensing committees but also took responsibility for Corporate Management and Overview and Scrutiny committees. This was due to the fact that my fellow Councillor Alan Alderson from Egham was Mayor and has to step aside during his mayoral year. It has been exceptionally busy so will be glad to see him return when his year concludes next month.

There has also been further editions of "Thorpe Together" collated, edited and printed and delivered and I wish to record my personal thanks to my fellow Councillor Margaret Harnden who has been left to do much of the work as role of Editor and this is despite many other Council and personal commitments.

I also chair the Waste and Recycling Working Group and it is good that overall the satisfaction levels from residents is positive especially over Christmas and other Bank Holidays. I think the one difficulty has been some items which can no longer be recycled. This was due to a change in the collection service from a different company and I agree this has confused and frustrated residents. Residents are also happy about the extra collections now available for small electrical items and textiles. Just put these items in a standard size carrier bag and leave next to food caddy for collection each week. The only proviso with textiles is that they must be kept dry so please take account of weather conditions.

Also last November I had the privilege of laying a poppy wreath at the war memorial on behalf of the Thorpe Ward Councillors.

I left the silk poppies in the planters to give some winter colour but hopefully the tulips will soon be poking through and then time for Summer planting.

I also planted up the three Magna Carta planters with daffodils which have looked superb and soon again it will be time for summer planting and RBC have agreed once again to water them all during the summer months.

As usual I always say something about Thorpe Youth Association Community Hall. The Hall continues to flourish and has recently been decorated internally. Community event such as the tea party by Five Pennies for the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday was held there and also a successful quiz night for St. Mary's Church Thorpe.

I think, as always there will be another busy year ahead but would urge everyone to be involved as much as possible. It is your community for you all to enjoy and thanks to Ian and Nigel who send out emails and keep website updated.

Thank You.